Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for patients and carers

Evoked Potential Tests

Neurophysiology

You have been referred for an Evoked Potential Test (EP) at the Royal Preston hospital. This leaflet will give you more information on what to expect from this test.

What is an Evoked Potential (EP) Test?

An EP is diagnostic test that is used to record the electrical changes within the nervous system in response to a sensory stimulus. This can be:

- **Visual** - you will look at a checkerboard pattern on a TV screen
- **Auditory** - you will be given headphones to wear which present 'clicking' sounds into each ear
- **Somatosensory** - stimulation is by electrical pulses these are most commonly applied at the wrist or ankle, but may be applied to other areas occasionally

Evoked potentials are a way of examining your central nervous system pathways. There are several reasons why your doctor may have referred you for an EP, including problems with your vision or your arms and legs.

How do I prepare for the test?

- Please ensure that your hair is clean and free from any products such as hairspray or gels
- Please avoid the use of creams/body lotions
- Loose fitting clothing that can be rolled above the elbow or knees is helpful for some types of EP, to avoid the need to change into a hospital gown

You can take all medications as normal prior to the test unless instructed otherwise. Please bring an up-to-date list of medications with you to your appointment.

What happens during the EP test?

A clinical physiologist will carry out your EP, they will fully explain what will happen during the test and ask you some questions about the symptoms you have been experiencing.

They will firstly measure your head and make some small marks with a soft pencil. A few small discs will be placed on your scalp and for some tests discs will also be placed at various points along your nervous system such as your back or neck.

Will I feel anything?

With visual or auditory EP tests you will feel nothing. The EPs that involve the use of electrical pulses will produce a tapping or tingling sensation.

Are there any side effects?

There are no side effects from the test. You can return to your normal daily activities following the test, including driving, eating, and drinking. There are no risks to pregnant ladies or their unborn children from this test.

What happens after the test?

After the recording is finished the clinical physiologist will remove all the electrodes from your scalp and clean your hair to remove the sticky paste, using warm water and cotton wool.
Your hair can feel sticky after the test, so you are advised to wash it with warm water and shampoo when you get home.

It will take approximately 2 weeks for the results to get back to your consultant. They will contact you in due course to discuss the results and any further treatment options if necessary.

How long does an EP take?

The whole test will take approximately 30-60 minutes. Sometimes your doctor might refer you for more than one type of EP; in this case the test can take longer.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Department of Clinical Neurophysiology
Royal Preston Hospital
Sharoe Green Lane
Fulwood Preston
PR2 9HT

Telephone: **01772 522559**
Email: neurophysiology@lthtr.nhs.uk

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.accessable.co.uk
www.patient.co.uk
www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware
https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

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This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:
patientexperienceandinvolvem@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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